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13 February 1950

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE, GENERAL STAFF,  
UNITED STATES ARMY

COPIES TO: Intelligence Advisory Committee Members of the  
Department of State, Navy, and Air Force

SUBJECT : Proposed Watch Committee

REFERENCE: Memorandum, subject as above, dated 20 January 1950,  
ID/GSUSA to D/CI, File CSGID-IWW 319.26, information  
copies of which were sent to Departments of State,  
Navy and Air Force

1. I have given consideration to the several questions raised in the reference and I am anxious to arrive at satisfactory solutions to the problems presented. I should like, however, to clarify certain differences in principle which I find expressed and implied in the reference in order that further action may proceed within clearly defined terms of reference.

2. The first difference in principle which I find in the reference applies to the responsibilities of the IAC with respect to crisis estimates, and the relationship of the Central Intelligence Agency to the departmental intelligence agencies. I refer specifically to your paragraph 1, and to the now-underlined portions of paragraph 2 b, Tab A of the reference. I offer the following comments on these points.

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a. The responsibilities of the Central Intelligence Agency by law require it to prepare national intelligence not only on crisis situations but on other matters, and not only for the members of the Intelligence Advisory Committee but also for the President, the National Security Council et al. Various National Security Council Intelligence Directives provide that the Departmental Intelligence agencies will interchange with, and provide or procure intelligence and intelligence information in support of the responsibilities of the Central Intelligence Agency. While the National Security Council in NSC 50 explicitly relieved the Intelligence Advisory Committee of "collective responsibility" for CIA reports and estimates, it did not relieve the intelligence agencies represented thereon from their responsibilities to CIA as set forth above. Nor did paragraph 6 in NSCID #1, revised 19 January 1950, alter previous responsibilities. It merely provided for quicker action and on a higher level than is customary, in the case of "Crisis Situations".

*Adol* /  
b. With respect to the question that CIA's "attitude has had an unfortunate tendency to impede the production of such coordinated comprehensive intelligence for the benefit of levels lower than those just mentioned," I fail to grasp the validity of this point. CIA's production is disseminated

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throughout the governmental intelligence structure. To the limits of their capabilities the Intelligence Advisory Committee intelligence agencies have participated in CIA's production. The Central Intelligence Agency does collaborate with analysts of State, Army, Navy and Air intelligence and does benefit from such collaboration. It would appear, and it is hoped that such benefits are mutual, and that far from "impeding" production they strengthen and improve it.

3. The second difference in principle is contained in the statements you have put forth in support of your conclusion that "the current Check List operation inadequately satisfies the urgent need of a continuing joint analysis of intelligence indications of probable future Soviet courses of action." I offer the following comments addressed specifically to your statements of "major defects" contained in Tab A of the reference.

a. Even though the Check List Officers have met only once as a group, between the dates indicated, procedures were established so that emergency or crisis situations could be met both during and outside normal working hours. A chronology of the activity taken by this Agency in connection with the Check List operation is included for your information under Tab A.

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b. In further consideration of specific aims and objectives of a "Permanent Watch Committee", representatives of the Central Intelligence Agency have met informally with Dr. Samuel McKee, ID, GSUSA, and Mr. Allan Evans, OIR, Department of State. On the basis of these informal conversations, and the reference, I have reached the following conclusions:

(1) The name "Check List Group" appears to convey the connotation of merely a collection and file maintenance operation. The name "Watch Committee" is therefore accepted as being more appropriate.

(2) While it was generally agreed at top levels in the Intelligence Advisory Committee in September that this operation should be set up informally at first in order to permit free evolution of ways and means, it now appears desirable and necessary to establish the currently constituted "Check List Group" by formal written IAC action as a permanent "Watch Committee".

(3) It is my firm conviction that the permanent Watch Committee should

(a) by means of frequent and regular meetings concentrate its attention upon the evidence of Soviet tactical preparations for war, ~~hot or cold~~, by focusing the attention of analysts in CIA and the IAC agencies on certain indicators or actions contained in the check list.

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(b) summarize, periodically, our knowledge and our gaps concerning Soviet activities in any given indicator,

(c) produce periodic evaluations of the most significant Soviet activities covered by the check list,

(d) produce short range tactical estimates of Soviet intentions based upon the significance of evaluated Soviet actions,

(e) convene immediately to deal with possible or probable "crisis situations".

→ *original sheet*  
The Watch Committee should not be diverted from the important and "crisis type" activities listed above by engaging in long range strategic estimates of Soviet capabilities and intentions.

(4) The preparation of periodic long range coordinated comprehensive rounded intelligence estimates of Soviet political, economic, sociological, army navy and air developments, and their bearing on the current Soviet position and future courses of action, which you describe in paragraphs 2 a and b of Tab A of the reference, has been handled in the past in accordance with D/CI 3/1 procedures, and by Ad Hoc interdepartmental committees. Such estimates should respond to the activities of the Watch Committee as set forth above, and should be produced

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against the broadest regional and global background. In view of the fact that Ad Hoc arrangements are not entirely satisfactory for this level of production, I have concluded that it would be advantageous to formalize the establishment of a separate interdepartmental mechanism for this purpose.

4. Accordingly I have directed the preparation of the necessary action papers to formalize by IAC action a permanent Watch Committee and a permanent committee on Soviet capabilities and intentions, long range, to be known as the "[ ] Committee". When completed, these action papers will be circulated for consideration and action by the Intelligence Advisory Committee.

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R. H. HILLENKOETTER  
Rear Admiral, USN  
Director

Enclosure

Tab A - Chronology

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CHRONOLOGY

of

CIA ACTIVITIES ON THE CHECK LIST OPERATION

*Nov 1948* *Proposal first stimulated, for limited use.*

19 August 1949 *State inaugurated*  
22 August to 9 September 1949 *1 IAC meeting in a State Comm. Hse.*  
12 September 1949 Preparation of draft memorandum issued by  
15 September to 26 September 1949 DCI 26 September 1949  
26 September 1949 Approval of draft memorandum by DCI  
30 September to 13 October 1949 Interviews with top members of IAC intelligence  
14 October to 1 November 1949 staffs to explain nature, operations, limitations of Check List  
26 September 1949 DCI issues memorandum to IAC members  
30 September to 13 October 1949 Check List Officers nominated by IAC agencies.  
14 October to 1 November 1949 Internal procedures set up in CIA and Check  
List needs discussed with CIA Offices  
(OSO, OPC, OSI)  
7 November 1949 Request sent to all IAC Check List Officers  
for summaries of available information  
bearing on Check List indicators falling  
logically under their purview. This request  
had a deadline 18 November, shortly after  
which a meeting was to be held.  
7 November to 15 November 1949 Check List Officers nominated by CIA Offices  
19 November to 29 November 1949 Reports received from Army and Navy; none  
from State and Air — *in answer to Memo of Nov 7.*  
5 December 1949 First Check List meeting; basic objectives and  
informal allocations of primary responsibility  
discussed, among other things; next meeting  
set for 11 January 1950  
*7 Dec, memo to Participating agencies*  
8 December to 13 December 1949 Interviews with various Check List Officers to  
discuss possibility of a "Christmas Flap";  
all agreed little likelihood.  
13 December 1949 Memorandum prepared as consensus of Check List  
opinion that "no flap" was expected -- held  
for use in case an apparent "flap" began  
during the holidays.  
14 December 1949 to 3 January 1950 Holidays; one or more Check List Officers were  
gone during this period  
11 January 1950 Meeting postpone due to non-receipt of  
scientific indicators from OSI for inclusion  
in the Check List  
17 January 1950 Meeting again postponed because revised Check  
List including OSI's contributions not yet  
completed. At the time of both these post-  
ponements all Check List Officers were con-  
tacted and none saw any crisis brewing that  
would have required a meeting without the  
new Check List.

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